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BRIEFING NOTE

TO: First Nations in BC
FROM: BCAFN Climate Emergency Portfolio
DATE: February 26, 2024
RE: **Facilitating the Development of a First Nations Climate Leadership Agenda in BC**

PURPOSE

To inform First Nations in BC on the ongoing development of a **First Nations Climate Leadership Agenda** in Canada and BC as part of the federal **Indigenous Climate Leadership Agenda (ICLA)**.

BACKGROUND

- A. Based on advocacy and ongoing work by the [Joint Committee on Climate Action](#) (JCCA), the Government of Canada committed to co-developing an Indigenous Climate Leadership Agenda (ICLA) in the [Strengthened Climate Plan](#), the [2030 Emission Reduction Plan](#), [Budget 2022](#), [National Adaptation Strategy](#), and the [UN Declaration Action Plan](#) (Article 29 pg.34).
- B. The ICLA will include distinctions-based agendas that build regional and national capacity that progressively vests authority and resources for climate action in the hands of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples and representative organizations.
- C. The **expected outcomes from the ICLA** are organized into three main areas:
 - 1) *transfer of federal funding*, 2) *collaborative decision-making on climate*, and 3) *support for climate leadership*.
- D. The Joint Committee on Climate Action (AFN-Canada technical table) laid the foundation for the Climate Leadership Agenda specific for First Nations. The First Nations Climate Leadership Agenda (FNCL Agenda) represents the First Nations-led process under the wider ICLA process and builds on longstanding dialogue and engagement between Canada and First Nations.
- E. The development of the FNCL Agenda is occurring at the national level, informed by regional and local, First Nations-led engagement across Canada in collaboration with Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and Crown-Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC)
- F. The BC FNCL Agenda will inform the Canada-wide FNCL Agenda, ultimately shaping the ICLA. To make the implementation of the FNCL Agenda a reality, a Memorandum to Cabinet (MC) and a budget will be presented to Cabinet (Fall of 2024/Winter of 2025) and Treasury Board respectively for deliberation and approval.
- G. The FNCL Agenda intends **to provide a roadmap** consisting of recommendations, policy directions and concrete deliverables to ensure that federal climate policy and legislation: a) addresses systemic barriers to exercising First Nations' self-determination and constitutionally protected rights in climate action; b)

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empowers First Nations' meaningful involvement in national climate governance; and c) ensures appropriate federal support for First Nations, consistent with Canada's fiduciary obligations.

- H. In 2019, the **First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC)** was mandated to develop a [First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan \(the BC FN Climate Strategy\)](#). The BC FN Climate Strategy was developed over three years and endorsed in early 2022 in the FNLC Chiefs-in-Assembly (Resolutions: BCAFN - 6/2022, UBCIC #2022-04 and FNS #0222.06.) The BC FN Climate Strategy presents a vision, guiding principles, and priorities for climate action articulated by leadership and community members from across the province.
- I. In this regard, [Resolution 07/2023](#) mandated BCAFN to collaboratively [facilitate the co-development of the FNCL Agenda in BC](#) with Title and Rights-holders and First Nations organizations across the province to ensure that First Nations' recommendations and policy directions outlined in the BC FNCL Agenda are fully considered in the Canada-wide FNCL. The BC FNCL Agenda must use the BC FN Climate Strategy as a foundation to guide the co-development process.

ANALYSIS

- J. In BC, the FNCL Agenda should identify and provide **priority actions and recommendations** to build a better system for climate response partnership between First Nations in BC and Canada, where First Nations exercise their self-determination and inherent rights and have a meaningful and clear role in federal policy, decision-making and governance as outlined in the UN Declaration.
- K. While national in scope, the BC FNCL Agenda and its proposed solutions should accommodate **place-based approaches, be driven by community-level objectives**, and support the creation of a framework of collaboration that accounts for regional, social, cultural, and spiritual differences.
- L. In British Columbia, the **co-development of the FNCL Agenda is not meant to repeat the development of the BC FN Climate Strategy or its implementation**. Instead, the FNCL Agenda should complement the FNLC's work to implement the strategy's pathways and actions, as mandated by Chiefs-in-Assembly in 2022.
- M. The BC FNCL Agenda **must build on previous engagements, discussions and work between Canada, BC and First Nations**. We know First Nations in BC face many barriers and systemic inequities when accessing federal climate funding.
- N. Canada does not require First Nations to come to a consensus on one vision for First Nations Climate Leadership; **approaches can vary regionally or otherwise as appropriate**. Similarly, there is no requirement that the co-development process be uniform for all First Nations; however, each process has similar timelines to submit recommendations in the fall of 2024 or the winter of 2025.
- O. **To guarantee accountability to federal and First Nations leadership** on the development process and implementation of the FNCL Agenda, the JCCA **proposed a Governance Model to ensure political oversight** of the technical discussions while explicitly recognizing the need to be directly informed by and responsive to the priorities, rights, and knowledges held by First Nation Title and Rights-holders.
- P. A Canada-wide **Steering Committee** will compile regional recommendations, prepare the draft FNCL Agenda's content, provide strategic direction and validate recommendations and outcomes with First



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Nations leadership and the JCCA. The Steering Committee comprises national and regional First Nations, members of the JCCA, ECCC and CIRNAC officials. It is also open to First Nations leadership and representatives who would like to participate in the co-developing process of the FNCL Agenda.

- Q. In addition to work at the regional level and meetings of the Steering Committee, the co-development of the FNCL Agenda includes 3 national-level meetings of regional leads to support the co-development process at the beginning, middle and end of the process) and two leadership gatherings. **Concerns have been raised about the timelines and how to include ensure that First Nations Leadership more meaningfully involved in the process and meetings.**

UPDATE ON THE BC FNCL AGENDA PROGRESS

- R. [Naqsmist](#) and the BCAFN have joined forces to collaborate with First Nations title and rights holders in co-developing the FNCL Agenda in BC. Input from the series of engagement activities will identify and provide priority actions, policy directions, and concrete recommendations to the federal government for implementing and advancing the FNCL Agenda in BC.
- S. **Co-developing the FNCL Agenda in British Columbia requires meaningful participation of First Nations Title and Rights-holders and First Nations organizations.** To ensure the FNCL Agenda is developed in a good way, BCAFN has facilitated the creation of a [BC FNCL Agenda Steering Committee](#) to provide direction and guide the co-development process based on guiding principles outlined in the [Terms of Reference](#).
- T. BCAFN Technical Staff and BC FNCL Agenda Steering Committee members have attended two National Steering Committee Meetings in May of 2023 and February 2024 and have attended AFN-hosted Caucus Meetings. To date, various concerns have been brought up regarding the **timelines and lack of transparency with the Memorandum to Cabinet.**

Engagement Activities

- U. From November 17-19, 2023 on Tsleil Waututh Territory, the BCAFN and Chief Darrel Bob (Xaxli'p First Nation) brought together Knowledge Keepers from across BC in ceremony to discuss the roots of climate change, its impacts on the Land and all living beings, as well as solutions and responsibilities.
- V. The Knowledge Keepers shared personal experiences, stories, prophecies, songs and teachings to support healing and guide our collective work on climate change, particularly the implementation of the [BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan](#) and the development of the BC FNCL Agenda. A [report](#) was prepared from the Gathering and a documentary-style video will be released in the coming months
- W. On December 1st, 2023, BCAFN and Naqsmist, in partnership with the federal government, hosted an engagement session to kick off the development of a BC FNCL Agenda. The session focused on the question: *What does 'co-development' with Canada mean to you?* A [What We Heard Report](#) was prepared and informed the engagement plan and the question development for the remainder of the engagements.

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X. BCAFN aims to engage First Nations governments, First Nations organizations and community members, including youth, women, 2SLGBTQQA+ and particularly Elders. Planned engagement activities include:

- Eight (8) in-person regional sessions across BC (April and May 2024).
- Thematic focus groups
- Interviews
- Virtual gatherings
- Capacity funding supports will be available for interested First Nations to review and contribute to the draft recommendations.

Details, documents and registration for the engagement sessions can be found [here](#).

Y. In addition, we strive for an inclusive and transparent process, with federal officials maintaining open lines of communication with Title and Rights-holders on the ground. BCAFN will facilitate communication and engagement on the ground.

NEXT STEPS

1. Finalize planning and complete engagement activities and draft preliminary recommendations.
2. Plan and attend the upcoming Leadership Gathering in July, 2024.
3. Present a progress update on the preliminary recommendations and engagement outcomes of the FNCL Agenda to Chiefs-in-Assembly in the fall of 2024.
4. Ensure recommendations are returned to the Chiefs-in-Assembly for review and relevant mandates.

If you are interested in learning more or participating in the BC FNCL Agenda engagement activities or process, please contact Patricia Rojas (patricia.rojas@bcfn.ca) or Kristi Denby (kristi.denby@bcfn.ca).



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